

*The Institution of Engineers, Australia: Sydney Division
Engineering Heritage Committee*

Oral History Program: Biographical Notes

Lyndon Roy LEEMBRUGGEN (1928-2018)

Mechanical Engineer

Birth & Family: Lyndon Roy Leembruggen was born 9 July 1928 at North Strathfield, Sydney, the first child of Lyndon Leembruggen, (manufacturing engineer), and Eleanor Nell (secretary).

He had 2 sisters.

Education: He attended Primary school at North Strathfield and later Summer Hill Boys Practice School (1938 -1949).

Secondary schooling was completed at Sydney Technical High School, Paddington, Sydney. After matriculating in 1945 he began a mechanical engineering degree at Sydney University.

After a year, Leembruggen transferred to Sydney Technical College to do a Diploma of Mechanical Engineering whilst doing a cadetship with his father's business, Leembruggen, Hoskins & Spencer Pty Ltd.

Qualifications: ASTC, FIEAust, CPEng, MUITP

Memberships:

Awards:

Work History: After completing his diploma and cadetship in 1949, Leembruggen joined Comeng, Brisbane as a draughtsman designing the first air-conditioned trains in Queensland. He became Assistant Design Engineer working on the interior design of the rail cars.

He returned to work at Leembruggen, Hoskins & Spencer in Sydney after marrying in 1952. As Works Manager, his duties included tendering, supervising and subcontracting. In 1956, he rejoined Comeng in Granville as section leader, designing refrigerator wagons and stainless-steel carriages.

In 1957, he was approached by Alcan Australia to work in marketing, sales and servicing. He spent 3 years involved in transport developing lightweight truck and train bodies.

From 1961 he spent 3 years with Ampol Petroleum as an automotive and technical services engineer with a focus on marketing.

Leembruggen joined Tulloch Ltd. at Rhodes as Rolling Stock Engineer working in marketing. He designed the double-decker electric carriage leading to a contract for 120 in 1964. He worked at Tulloch until retrenched a year and a half later due to company restructuring.

Rejoining Alcan Australia as Marketing Manager for Transport from 1964 to 1966, he helped introduce aluminium boats, truck bodies, buses and bulk train wagons. After returning to Comeng for a year in 1968 Leembruggen worked for Comalco designing aluminium petrol tankers and bulk wagons.

In 1969, he established his own consultancy business in West Ryde. He assisted 300 companies or so including Goninans, in Newcastle, and the

South Australian Government with research, development and equipment design. The company became Elroy Engineering in 1973. Elroy assisted Qantas with designing electric tarmac buses that were later adapted for city transport when the Qantas contract was delayed. The Townobile was launched in June 1976 and attracted global interest.

From 1973 to 1996, Elroy Engineering Pty Ltd pursued the development of the Townobile series of electric vehicles producing 4 prototypes and designing 25 models in total. Despite encouragement and support from IEAust, Sydney Transport Panel, BHP and Pacific Dunlop and numerous tenders in Australia and overseas the electric transport system is yet to be implemented.

Prepared by Michelle Keatinge, March 2003 from oral history interviews conducted on 24 October 1998.